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General Assembly
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Official Records

36th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 43 and 42 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/201)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/60/279)

Draft resolutions (A/60/L.4 and A/60/L.5)

Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/259)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.6)

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted recently at the 2005 world summit reaffirms the General Assembly's Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action and the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace; welcomes the Alliance for Civilizations initiative announced by the Secretary-General in July this year; and calls on countries to take action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations at the local, national, regional and international levels. The Chinese delegation believes that the outcome document has provided the Organization and Member States with a good opportunity to accelerate the implementation of those commitments and initiatives.

There are nearly 200 countries in the world, which has more than 6 billion people. Despite the differences in their historical backgrounds, social systems, developmental levels, cultural traditions and religious beliefs, they have all contributed to the civilization of humanity. The global diversity and differences of civilizations and cultures should not be sources for conflict in the world. They should, instead, provide the motivation, impetus and springboard for international exchanges and cooperation.

The expansion of economic globalization has further complicated economic and social problems. Countries must therefore act in a spirit of openness and equality, acknowledge the diversity in the world, strengthen dialogue and exchanges among civilizations, resolve international and regional disputes through peaceful means and jointly build a world of harmony among all civilizations.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, counter-terrorism has become the international community's main focus of attention, and many efforts have been undertaken in that regard. In our counter-terrorist endeavour, we should give up the practice of associating terrorism with any particular civilization or religion. Only thus can we truly mobilize the forces of all countries to fight against terrorism and safeguard world peace.

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We are pleased to note that, since 2001, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations has become an important initiative for deepening mutual understanding among nations. The United Nations, the relevant international organizations and Member States have carried out study trips, cultural and educational exchanges and joint scientific research. That has effectively increased the understanding of other cultures and religious beliefs among peoples in various countries and has promoted a more extensive culture of peace.

The reports submitted by the Secretary-General under agenda items 42 and 43 affirm the active engagement of Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions in the United Nations dialogue among civilizations and in the culture of peace. They describe valuable contributions made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and put forward new recommendations for future work. We would like to express our appreciation for those efforts.

China has a 5,000-year-old history; the Chinese culture is a crystallization of long-term exchanges and blending among all Chinese ethnic cultures and between Chinese and foreign cultures. Diversity, tolerance and harmony are important features of Chinese culture.

In recent years, the Chinese Government has actively responded to United Nations initiatives. It has hosted quite a few international meetings on dialogue among civilizations and conducted wide-ranging cultural exchanges with many countries. China has also submitted its report to the United Nations on implementing the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and has actively participated in the drafting of the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity. These efforts have increased understanding between China and other countries and have played a vigorous role in promoting economic and social development. In future, the Chinese Government will continue to strengthen its cultural exchanges and dialogues on civilization with other countries and will make joint efforts for human progress and world peace and development.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): This year marks the midpoint of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace. It is time to take stock of how much has been achieved and balance it against the targets that were set with so much hope over five years ago.

It is true that, when reviewed, a number of aims may not have been realized. It is also true that, in the thinking of some, the United Nations has reduced its support of certain aspects of the spirit of the culture of peace. It must be borne in mind, however, that since the adoption in 1997 of resolution 52/15 proclaiming 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace and resolution 53/25 in 1998 proclaiming 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the United Nations has had to deal with a number of other important issues and major incidents.

We have witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers, the war in Iraq, fighting in Afghanistan, famine in Somalia and ethnic problems in Sudan, among so many others. So, while United Nations efforts may be regarded as insufficient, they must be weighed against the Organization's ability to deal adequately with all the issues on its agenda.

While we agree with the general thrust of the points raised in the civil society report at the midpoint of the Decade for a Culture for Peace, we must say that one cannot hope to get one's wishes granted completely. Furthermore, there are other branches of the United Nations that are actively pursuing the realization of particular issues but are not quite ready to present reports.

In this regard, we would like to thank the Director General of UNESCO for his report on the implementation of resolution 58/11, as transmitted by the Secretary-General in document A/60/279 on 19 August 2005. UNESCO launched Manifesto 2000 at the beginning of the Decade to create public awareness. The Manifesto has been signed by 75,845,317 people so far. This figure represents more than one per cent of the world's population. The interactive website set up by UNESCO has to date received hits from 1,181 participants to disseminate information. Fiji — and, I am certain, our region — welcomes this UNESCO initiative, not only to keep us informed but also to reduce to manageable proportions our often referred-to tyranny of distance.

The United Nations defines the culture of peace as

> "respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development,

education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed at the creation of conditions for peace and its consolidation". (*resolution 53/25*)

The culture of peace provides us a positive alternative to the culture of war that has dominated human history up to now. It is a holistic approach that can facilitate the integration and synergy of all of the great social movements of our time.

We have repeated the definition here, so that it won't be confused with other cultural initiatives that might have been launched or other peace projects. The culture of peace is all-embracing, and it behooves us all to find ways in which we can help. Too often, we cite size and fiscal difficulties as excuses not to participate, even though others not so well off have made commendable efforts towards this worthwhile effort on the part of our young people. A prayer costs nothing; yet, how many prayer breakfasts have we attended where one sentence might mention our young people and their attempts to inculcate a culture of peace in our daily lives? If this sounds simple, then it is our contention that it was designed to be simple. None of the youth involved have drafted a statement for the General Assembly or its Main Committees. Their minds are clear and their consciences as yet unfettered by the worries of the world, but they want to help.

UNESCO's education objective activities have been focused on education for peace, human rights and linguistic diversity. The UNESCO education sector includes the development of national plans and programmes on human rights education through national and subregional projects. The main objective of these activities has been to help Member States modify legislation and practices in their educational policies to ensure that values such as human rights, peace, democratic participation, tolerance, non-violence and intercultural understanding are included in curricula, and to ensure that the corresponding educational processes are consistent with the teaching of such values, taking into account the socio-cultural background of each country.

Fiji welcomes the draft convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expression. We believe that this draft convention fits hand in glove with the culture of peace, and we hope that it will be adopted unanimously. This is one of the reasons we presented a candidate for the UNESCO Executive Board, who was elected last week.

Other organs of the United Nations are also involved in the pursuit of peace, UNICEF being one of them. They have to be commended for their commitment and sincere attempts to make a difference. The International Labour Organization's contribution to a culture of peace and non-violence has been its intervention in the field of prevention and rehabilitation of children affected by war, implemented within the framework of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has for the last 10 years devoted much attention to addressing violence as a major public health problem. In October 2002, WHO launched a World Report on Violence and Health, which described the extent of violence as a global public health problem. It set out a prevention strategy and made nine recommendations that are the foundation of WHO's violence prevention work.

In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with UNESCO, launched the "Education for All" Initiative as part of the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development. The Initiative seeks to use education as a means of empowering rural people to become full actors, making them less vulnerable to conflict and more resilient to recover from conflict. The United Nations University organized two major research projects that are tied exclusively to the International Decade, the broad objective of which is to promote knowledge of the impact of armed conflict on children and the challenges involved in trying to improve their situation.

There is little doubt that the culture of peace is an ideal worthy of pursuit. It will take time for all aspects of the requirements and demands it poses to be realized. Some patience has to be exercised. Acceptance of the efforts exerted thus far by the United Nations is for the good of all. Demanding a lot more will be more destructive than constructive. A culture of peace is an ideal that requires a lot of deep thought to be fully absorbed and to replace current thinking. However, like all new innovative ideas, time is a prime requirement for shifting the paradigm.

Mr. Meyer (Brazil): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the preparation of the reports before the General Assembly.

Brazil is a strong supporter of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World has generated, and continues to generate, great interest in Brazil. At all levels of Government, in civil society and in the media, Brazil, as a traditionally peace-loving country, is increasingly committed to the promotion of a culture of peace through the promotion of democracy; human rights and the elimination of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance; gender equality and sustainable social and economic development, as well as the eradication of hunger, poverty and illiteracy. In our view, it has now become quite clear that, given the global revolution in information, domestic concerns and foreign policy and security considerations should be able to interact positively in the process of creating a better life for all.

Nearly 100 civil-society actors — including universities, schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector — are currently involved in 13 projects that are directly linked to the culture of peace. Over 15 million Brazilians have signed the 2000 Manifesto launched by UNESCO. Various programmes on the culture of peace have been developed in Brazil with the cooperation of UNESCO. Among them, seven of our states have already adopted the programme entitled "Making room: education and culture for peace", which outlines a strategy for opening schools on weekends for activities in the fields of sport, art, culture and leisure.

Moreover, there is great convergence between the principles established in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and Brazil's 2004 to 2007 multi-year strategic plan, entitled "Brazil for all". That plan identifies three major goals, namely, promoting social inclusion and reducing social inequality; achieving environmentally sustainable growth aimed at generating employment and income and reducing regional inequalities; and promoting and expanding citizenship and democracy.

With regard to education, Brazil's national human rights education programme provides a strong framework for the promotion of education that is fundamentally in line with the principles of the culture of peace. The plan outlines actions to promote a culture of respect for fundamental human rights through the participation of different groups from civil society and the institutions of the legal and justice systems. The programme is based on the belief that a situation of persistent violations can only be altered by fostering generations of citizens who are able to contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law and the culture of peace, who are conscious of their rights and of the means at their disposal for the protection of those rights and who are imbued with respect for plurality and cultural, sexual, ethnic, gender and religious diversity.

Also in line with the culture of peace is Brazil's handbook on religious diversity and human rights, which was issued after a process of consultations with religious leaders carried out over the course of nearly a year and a half. The handbook is based on the conviction that Brazil's plurality of races and cultures, as well as its religious freedom, makes it unique. It acknowledges, however, the persistence of some prejudice, particularly with regard to Afro-Brazilian, indigenous and Roma religious manifestations. It also states clearly that such prejudice is absolutely unacceptable and incompatible with Brazil's commitment to a culture of peace.

Finally, I would like to refer to the programme entitled "Brazil without homophobia", our national programme to combat violence and discrimination against gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual persons, as well as to promote citizenship among homosexuals. The programme outlines actions to strengthen public and non-governmental institutions involved in promoting citizenship among homosexuals and combating homophobia, build capacity among professionals and representatives of the homosexual movement active in the promotion of human rights, disseminate information on rights and the promotion of self-esteem among homosexuals and promote the filing of complaints on violations of the human rights of gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual persons.

It is Brazil's firm belief that the promotion of a culture of peace, to which we are all committed, must contain all the elements I have mentioned. A comprehensive culture of peace is an essential goal of our social and economic development.

Mr. Summaida'ie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to join in the debate on agenda

items 43 and 42 on a culture of peace and the dialogue among civilizations. Consideration of those two items is of increasing importance today, first and foremost because of the rapid pace of political, economic and cultural change and scientific advances. Such transformations are the result of the unprecedented development of informatics and communications technology, which — whether we like it or not — will lead to coexistence in abstract and concrete terms.

We need a serious dialogue among civilizations in order to strengthen the culture of peace. There is a certain arrogant mindset, however, that seeks to impose its own culture by trying to marginalize other cultures, and that in turn has resulted in a movement rejecting that approach. Unfortunately, however, that movement is marked by a tendency to look to the past. That can lead only to conflict among civilizations. Let us hope that it is only a temporary trend, since it runs counter to the fervent desire of humankind for peaceful coexistence. We must not move backwards.

The dialogue among civilizations has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1998, and since the fifty-sixth session in 2001. All countries, specialized agencies of the United Nations and civil society organizations are called upon to take part in activities to promote a dialogue among cultures. By focusing on the importance of establishing peace, security and stability worldwide, the dialogue among civilizations has increasingly become a subject of popular and realistic discussion, and is no longer a purely philosophical concept. It promotes integration and has been widely accepted by various peoples, irrespective of their cultural and religious backgrounds.

A small minority is trying to counter that promising trend by attempting to exploit religion for purely political ends and to marginalize it by engaging in terrorist acts that have claimed thousands of innocent civilian lives. Such actions do not have a place in a tolerant society or a society that accepts change. We must therefore put a stop to such practices. We must stop all attempts to cause chaos and destruction. Peoples throughout the world are called upon to counter such acts, for terrorism knows no religion or nationality and has no homeland. As a result, it is divorced from everything that has to do with human civilization.

If the dialogue among civilizations is to be taken seriously, it must be based upon principles of democracy, freedom and justice with a view to strengthening the culture of peace. Those factors should have a positive impact on relationships between countries in terms of their various activities and the various aspects of their political, economic, cultural and scientific life.

Given the growing interdependence among all the countries and peoples of the world, no country, however powerful, can isolate itself from other countries. Humankind occupies a common domain that includes all civilizations. It is therefore only natural that genuine values of dialogue among cultures and civilizations should be strengthened considerably in order to enhance the culture of peace and promote greater understanding among religions and cultures so that harmony and cooperation can reign.

All civilizations are called upon to reject all negative practices in the quest for development and progress. We must do away with any sense of supremacy or pre-eminence. Civilizations that have made only limited progress to date in technology should not fall prey to feelings of inferiority. The path must be open to all human societies so that they can adapt to global change, which requires cooperation and true interdependence.

Thus, we all have the obligation to accept others and not reject them because of religious belief, lifestyle or cultural background. Religion should not be used as a pretext to marginalize or exclude others. We need to ensure that a culture of tolerance prevails, because hot spots of tension can emerge where extremism exists.

The United Nations system plays a leading role in the dialogue among civilizations because of its diversity. In that context, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should play a key role, given the nature of its activities. We thank UNESCO for its efforts; we are fully confident that its medium-term strategy for 2002-2007, which takes into account the dialogue among civilizations, will play a successful role in making the dialogue a reality.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): The Charter of the United Nations enjoins us, as Member States, to promote friendly relations based on peace and cooperation. International mechanisms to promote those objectives have their proper place and functions, seeking to regulate relations between States through the adoption of rules and norms of international law and through the

operation of mechanisms for conflict resolution and the peaceful settlement of disputes. But all that may not be enough if we are to succeed in saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

In their daily lives, people can play an important role in the advancement of global harmony, understanding and peaceful relations. The promotion of a culture of peace in all nations is essential in the light of our increased awareness of the potential for conflict in a diverse world with often conflicting interests.

At the Second South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, held in Qatar in June, heads of State or Government adopted the Doha Declaration, in which leaders recognized that respect for religious and cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world contributes to international cooperation, promotes enhanced dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations and helps to create an environment conducive to the exchange of human experience.

The global environment is one of diversity in culture, religion, political system and economic conditions. A process of deepening interdependence through increased communication and interchange among nations is taking place, especially within the process of globalization. That is a significant reality of our time. The greater the degree of contact, the greater the need for promoting ideals of tolerance and understanding of differences. One of the dangers of globalization is a tendency towards homogenization and the imposition of the cultural norms and standards of the strong, who have power and influence over those who are weak. Tensions will arise from such interactions. That danger can be averted by cultivating values that promote tolerance and respect for pluralism. All peoples have the right to live their lives in accordance with the principle of self-determination and the preservation of their cultural heritage.

In promoting a culture of tolerance and the ideal of peace, various sectors have an important role to play.

The first is the role of national institutions in the promotion of peaceful relations and the avoidance of conflict. Militarism, the development of sophisticated armaments and the glorification of military exploits undermine the inculcation of values of peace and non-violence in the process of socialization. School curricula at all levels should endeavour to provide guidance on the values of non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity and the importance of peaceful methods of conflict resolution. Nowhere is it more important to promote those values and attitudes than among youth. That is the starting point for ensuring that non-violence is promoted in all our societies.

The second element is the role of civil society, which has a vital role to play in ensuring success in our overall effort. Peace movements and organizations, in their opposition to war, have played a significant role in the mobilization of public opinion. It is important that they be encouraged to build national and international coalitions and to exert influence, through the democratic process, on policies and actions of Governments in favour of peace.

The third element is the significant role of international and national media outlets in exercising greater responsibility in supporting the values of peace and cooperation among States. Too often, media presentations have demonstrated a tendency to highlight materials that generate patriotic fervour and encourage the resort to the use of force. Instead, there is need to give exposure to the horrors of war and civil conflict, which should persuade leaders and policymakers to look for peaceful solutions and avoid the military option. Also important is a reduction of the level of violence that is promoted in the entertainment industry, which influences young minds. It is important not to glorify or glamorize military exploits or violent conduct.

The fourth element is the work done by the United Nations system, in particular the work done by UNESCO in promoting the Programme of Action of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. We welcome the information provided in the UNESCO report on the midterm global review of the International Decade (A/60/279), which outlines activities pursued in various agencies under the leadership of UNESCO. We are of the view that there is still considerable room for further work. Greater publicity needs to be given to the Programme through the Department of Public Information, and further efforts are needed to establish networks of relevant civil society organizations to generate greater awareness. There is need for further mobilization of human and material resources at all levels for activities that promote the various aspects of a culture of peace.

Jamaica is doing its part through its programmes in schools to promote a culture of peace and non-violence. The Jamaican Schools Improvement Peace Programme is one recent initiative. It does not use a pre-designed programme. The aim is for each school, in conjunction with the community, to assess its own needs and to conceive and build its own peace programme. Seven schools have been participating in that initiative under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture. Since 1994, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, there has been an ongoing school programme on the subject of peace that promotes the inculcation of the values of peace and non-violence among our young people.

Progress over the next five years will require the full involvement of national Governments, civil society and the mass media to support the Global Campaign. We continue to encourage the United Nations to play a central role in coordinating programmes and supporting initiatives at the national level.

We have also studied the report of the Secretary-General on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations (A/60/259). The goals of that initiative to promote greater understanding among civilizations are of vital importance in the world today. Respect for diversity and an understanding that no civilization can claim superiority over others in values and achievements is an essential starting point for that global dialogue.

It is clear from reading the report that further steps need to be taken to advance the dialogue. Some of the ideas in the Secretary-General's report are useful, particularly in drawing attention to activities that can be pursued at the local level, where in many societies there are microcosms of different civilizations. That is a good approach, and will contribute to the success of the global dialogue.

Our delegation has some reservations on some of the ideas contained in the Secretary-General's report. In paragraph 16 of the report, it is suggested that the global dialogue is a response to terrorism. We have doubts about that analysis. We believe it is preferable to emphasize the interdependence of the global community, which brings about greater contact between diverse cultures and peoples.

As this process expands, it becomes more important to eliminate intolerance, extremism, polarization, enmity and conflict. The understanding and appreciation of the richness of diversity and the positive dimensions of all civilizations should be promoted in all societies. Jamaica will continue to support the global dialogue as part of the overall goal of strengthening the culture for peace.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his reports on the promotion of interreligious dialogue (*A/60/201*) and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations (*A/60/259*). I also wish to thank UNESCO for providing us with an extensive report on the midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-1010 (*A/60/279*), as well as for having undertaken numerous initiatives in recent years to promote the Decade and the Global Agenda.

Manifesto 2000, which has been signed by over 75 million people worldwide, is a truly commendable initiative, and should be continued. Each and every one of us should serve as a messenger of peace and as a goodwill ambassador. For that reason, my delegation wishes to express our appreciation to civil society for engaging so actively in promoting the Decade and the Global Agenda.

My delegation welcomes the report on the contributions by almost 700 civil-society organizations from over 100 countries, as appears in the annex to UNESCO's report (*A/60/279*). We do recognize that Governments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, need to continue to work together closely to maintain the momentum of the Decade until its completion in 2010.

Thailand is supportive of many international initiatives in support of the culture of peace and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations. We are part of the Alliance of Civilizations, initiated by Spain and Turkey and announced in July 2005. Thailand is also part of the interfaith dialogue initiated by the Philippines, which held its summit at the General Assembly in September. We are traditional sponsors of the relevant draft resolutions submitted under these agenda items. We will continue to support all initiatives and efforts towards those ends.

Given the prevailing state of violence in the world, we do need more such initiatives, and we need to spread the message of peace and understanding as

far as we can. We need to put those words of goodwill into practice, and we need to make peace an integral part of or lives. Each individual, family and community must serve as a building block for global peace. Peace is not an ultimate idealistic end. Peace is a process. Peace is not merely the state of the absence of violence. Peace is about human security. It is about freedom to live free from want and fear, and about living in dignity. We need to create not only a culture of peace but an enabling environment for peace. If we live in the absence of violence but with an empty stomach, we will eventually return to conflicts. If we live with the absence of violence today but with mistrust for each other, that will lead to conflicts tomorrow. Peace is not a state frozen in time. We need to continually cultivate and foster it.

Can we really say to ourselves that any country is truly living in peace today? The world has become very interdependent. As members of the global family we are all vulnerable to violence and conflicts. On a global scale, we are living in daily risk of terrorist attacks. On a smaller scale, we are living in communities prone to conflicts. What factors contribute to depriving us of peace? Let me cite just three main factors: anger, greed and wrong thinking.

Anger is the most obvious factor for, and manifestation of, violence and conflict. On the ideological side, we need love, compassion and understanding to overcome anger. We need to think of others as members of our kin, and we need forgiveness. Has history not taught us that violence will only breed more violence? We need to realize that we are all in this together. No person, society or country will be safe if others are living in abject poverty and conflict. No arms or weapons will ever suffice to overcome human anger. To create a culture of peace, we need education that enhances understanding and fosters respect for diversity and differences. We also need to analyse factors that breed anger in many societies — such as marginalization, a sense of powerlessness and a perception that local traditions and identities are being attacked by the globalization process — so that we can effectively address them at an early stage.

Greed is another factor that undermines peace. Greed manifests itself in the form of competition for, and exploitation of, wealth and resources. That has led to conflicts everywhere in the world. Injustice is a fertile ground for breeding violence. In Africa, competition for natural resources is one of the main factors for the conflicts that have been plaguing the continent. Unjust economic competition and business rivalries, in all of their sophisticated forms, can also produce breeding grounds for mistrust and conflicts among nations.

In mentioning greed and exploitation, my delegation would like to highlight one fact: we must live in peace not only with one another, but also with nature and the environment. To ensure sustainable peace, we must respect the environment. If we live without sufficiently caring for our environment, we will find ourselves in a very perilous situation one day. Today, the world is beginning to show many signs of weariness, with the increasing incidence of natural disasters — including the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, Hurricanes Ivan, Emily and Katrina, the mudslide in Guatemala and the earthquakes in Pakistan and India — and the consequent tragic losses of lives. Even if we can live with our neighbours without conflict, we find ourselves vulnerable to natural risks. We need to recognize the butterfly effect: what we do in our very own homes will affect our brothers and sisters in a distant corner of the world. To cultivate a culture of peace, then, is not only to do away with conflict, anger and hatred, but also to stress the need to lessen — if not eliminate — our greed and to instil a sense of responsibility in all of us to respect and protect Mother Nature.

One other factor that seriously threatens peace everywhere is wrong thinking. We should begin engaging in right thinking — the idea that, despite our differences and diversity, we can all live together in peace and harmony. We must learn to make room for compromise. We might say that we do not choose to live with people from another country whose religion is very different from ours, whose skin is of another colour and whose thinking we do not share. But do we really have any choice? Like it or not, we are bound together by humanity. We are all in this boat together, and we must recognize that fact and try to do our best to live together in peace and harmony.

Of course, we need tools to assist us in recognizing that fact. Governments must ensure that education, both formal and informal, at all levels will lend itself to creating understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity. History should be written to record facts and to provide useful lessons so as not to repeat itself. We must make conscientious efforts to do

away with wrong perceptions, misunderstandings and ignorance.

Children and young people from various cultures should be encouraged to meet and exchange their views and experiences. Bringing together children and young people from countries engaged in armed conflict and enabling them to understand each other's worlds is a step forward in creating peace over the long term. Teaching children about the cost of violence and conflict can also be an investment in peace.

The use of media can be of tremendous value in cultivating a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. The media must be responsible and must uphold ethical standards in reporting. The communication and advertising industries must think not only in terms of profits, but also in terms of social impacts. The incitement of hatred and stereotyping must be done away with altogether. We should think twice about the use of video games with simulated scenes of violence among children. Indeed, we should not allow ourselves to become accustomed to violence. Parents should be responsible not only towards their children, but towards society. Governments must work with parents to provide an environment in which children can grow up into responsible citizens. Education, work and daily life must have the sole purpose of peace.

At the September summit, our leaders recognized the linkages among development, peace and security and human rights. That is not simply a political message intended for a lofty level of discourse; it is a working philosophy that needs to be put into practice. In our future initiatives and activities to promote a culture of peace and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, we need to reflect on the critical linkages among development, peace and security and human rights. Peace will need to be cultivated in a holistic manner, both in terms of ideology and of real practice, both in our minds and on the ground.

In that regard, my delegation supports the various recommendations of UNESCO contained in document A/60/279, which seek, among others, to develop coordination mechanisms at the international, regional and national levels to strengthen cooperation among all relevant actors — the United Nations system, Member States, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations; to reinforce more explicitly the links with other international decades or years, such as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development — 2005-2014 and the Millennium Development Goals; to develop communication and information tools that will perpetuate the global momentum for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations; and to encourage the mass media at the international and national levels to support a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

Peace is a process. Peace is multidimensional and must be cultivated and fostered in a comprehensive manner. Each and every one of us can be a messenger of peace. My delegation hopes that, in a few years' time, it can look back upon the completion of the Decade and see that our world has become safer from violence and conflicts, from terrorist attacks and natural disasters and from other threats. We do not have to look elsewhere; we must look to ourselves. We must be kind to our neighbours and responsible towards Mother Nature. A culture of peace will not begin elsewhere; it will begin with us.

Mr. Martínez (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of the Republic of El Salvador is convinced of the need to consider the subject of a culture of peace at this plenary meeting, bearing in mind the reaffirmation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and the World Programme of Action for a Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action, contained in the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the 2005 world summit.

El Salvador welcomes the midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (*A/60/279*). The report sets out guidelines for evaluating the various initiatives in this area launched by Governments, civil society, international organizations and the United Nations system. In addition, it enables us to consider the need to more closely link the progress made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals with the objectives established for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. In that context, it is important to stress that the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace constitute a broad and comprehensive framework for promoting and consolidating a culture of peace at the national and international levels.

As we have recognized on various occasions, peace is not only the absence of conflict; it also entails a conscious effort of creation and empowerment in the minds of human beings. The concept of a culture of peace is closely linked to dialogue and an alliance among civilizations. We have recognized that all cultures and civilizations stand on an equal footing and that dialogue must be based on shared values and principles promoted by a culture of peace: inter alia, tolerance, respect for others, mutual understanding, respect for cultural diversity and support for non-violence and the principles of peaceful coexistence. In that context, the Government of El Salvador reaffirms its support for the Alliance of Civilizations initiative announced by the Secretary-General on 14 July 2005 and promoted by Spain and Turkey, among other countries.

In the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (*A/59/565*), it is made clear that the very concept of the United Nations in 1945 was a response to the collective desire to build a culture of peace. Moreover, the main challenge of the twenty-first century is to expand and place in context the meaning of collective security, together with all the responsibilities, commitments, strategies and institutions required for the establishment of an effective, efficient and equitable collective security system.

Support for a culture of peace and for dialogue among cultures and civilizations is a substantial part of that effort; indeed, globalization and the emergence of new threats and challenges to humanity require such support. Suffice it to recall that new information technologies, the greater level of regional integration and the dynamic flows of national and international migration enable people from all over the world to get to know each other, talk about their differences and exchange ideas, knowledge and values.

In that context, my Government reaffirms its commitment to and recognition of the right to peace as one of the fundamental pillars of the ideology of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a third-generation right that this Assembly recognized in resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984, and it was reaffirmed by the States members of the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Reaffirmation of Caracas, when we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the OAS Charter.

We recognize the fundamental role of education in building and consolidating a culture of peace. In that respect, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations system — in particular, UNESCO — in strengthening their activities for education for peace, human rights and linguistic diversity, as well as technical cooperation efforts with Member States to complement national action. We agree on the need to create machinery to coordinate at every level, in order to intensify cooperation among all relevant actors in the promotion and consolidation of a culture of peace.

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming the political will of El Salvador regarding the promotion and consolidation of a culture of peace, as well as the need to achieve the proposals of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My statement will address agenda item 42 on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, and agenda item 43 on a culture of peace. My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his note on the Midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (*A/60/279*) and his reports on the state of the Global Agenda for Dialogue Among Civilizations (*A/60/259*) and the promotion of interreligious dialogue (*A/60/201*).

The promotion of interreligious dialogue and dialogue among civilizations are, in our point of view, two components of the same action to fight obscurantism and extremism of all types. To be sure, communication is the sole means to understand others. Such understanding guarantees tolerance, which in turn generates respect — a key factor for peaceful coexistence among peoples, religions and civilizations.

From that standpoint, we should therefore encourage the efforts of UNESCO, working together with civil society, to promote dialogue among peoples, via the Mondialogo initiative. In fact, the resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on new prospects for activities of UNESCO with respect to a dialogue among civilizations and in particular, the follow-up to the Ministerial Conference of New Delhi, gives that organization the legal basis to launch initiatives at the national, regional and international levels by joining with many non-governmental and

governmental players. The international community and civil society need to associate themselves with the implementation of those initiatives.

The rise of extremism and fanaticism that are not specific to any religion or civilization, is of great concern. The search for the causes of that phenomenon will bring to light insufficient dialogue and inadequate channels of knowledge and reciprocal knowledge. The remedy to the situation lies in increasing cultural, inter-ethnic and inter-civilizational efforts aimed at promoting contact between communities and enabling better interaction between peoples.

The great number of festivals, cultural events, sports events and religious conferences organized in recent years attest to the collective awareness that dialogue is a key factor in establishing peace. However, it is no less true that dialogue can only be constructive if it is put on solid footing. The commitment of the international community is necessary in order to disseminate a culture of peace, based upon adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity and cooperation, pluralism and cultural diversity. It must also be based upon dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations.

The adoption of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity on 2 November 2001 once again confirmed the commitment of that organization to promote the fertile diversity of cultures for a more open and more creative world in the new context of the twenty-first century, which will make it possible to strengthen the dialogue.

The legal instruments for cultural diversity have just been enriched today by UNESCO's adoption, by an overwhelming majority, of the Convention on Cultural Diversity, which removes culture from the rules of international trade. The many ratifications will confirm the overall awareness of the role that respect for cultural diversity can play in the peaceful coexistence among peoples.

It would also be appropriate to carry out a comparative study of existing initiatives in order to make up the shortcomings. UNESCO is, in our view, the appropriate organization to carry out that kind of survey. It should be called upon to provide its assistance to all those who are working towards that same end. The media could be involved to genuinely present religions as instruments of peace.

Certain of the virtues of dialogue, I welcomed the decision of the Secretary-Ge United Nations to establish a high-level wo on the alliance of civilizations. Initiate friendly countries — Spain and Turkey — t group, which also includes an eminent Mo been instructed to propose common actions the causes and consequences of the diff understanding.

In that context, Morocco initiated Declaration adopted by experts working o called "Roads of Faith" on 23 June 19 proposed that the Director General of establish institutes to study the three m scriptures. Experts of the three monotheisti and their specific cultures would seek nev dialogue by going beyond the conventional of the history of compared religions. Teache in this area should also share the same ideal

In addition, my country, favoure geographic and historical location, has alwa the crossroads of civilizations and relig special role is at the root of its commi decades now, to interreligious dialogue. regularly hosts events and conferences in tha most recent — an international confe educators, journalists, artists, writers governmental specialized organizations, a religious and spiritual leaders, scientists, eng various technical experts — took place in 14-16 July 2005.

That conference adopted a plan of act implementation of dialogue through educatio the sciences, communication and inform addition and given that the new i technologies now play a key role in the culture and promotion of dialogue amon Morocco supported the initiative that was pr His Excellency, Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, Pr Senegal, at the first phase of the World Sum Information Society, in which he calle establishment of a digital solidarity fund. M has contributed 300,000 euros to that fund.

The Kingdom of Morocco sponso resolutions A/60/L.4, A/60/L.5 and A/60/L. respectively, "Promotion of interreligious di cooperation for peace", "International Dec Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the

the World, 2001-2010" and "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations".

Convinced of the relevancy of the message conveyed by those drafts and in accordance with its commitment to a culture of dialogue for peace, we hope that the sixtieth session of the General Assembly will adopt the drafts by consensus.

Mr. Shrestha (Nepal): We are living in a world characterized by great possibilities and uncertainties. On the one hand, thanks to human genius and human prowess, the world has never been as close and interlinked as it is today. Physical distances have been increasingly blurred, and the world has become as one family. We are more familiar with each other's languages, cultures, traditions, music, literature, sports and so on. Growing interconnectedness and interdependence, which is the hallmark of the new millennium, has been a major unifying force, bringing nations and civilizations ever closer.

On the other hand, the world has also witnessed the unfortunate saga created by disruptive and divisive forces in the form of war, civil strife, ethnic and religious intolerance, hatred, violence and, lately, the threatening menace of terrorism. Those ugly and disruptive forces are having a severe impact on the bedrock of humankind's core values and human civilizations.

Herein lies the significance of the culture of peace, which rejects the culture of violence, extremism and fanaticism and adheres to the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, dignity and harmony. Those are the cardinal principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Rejecting the culture of violence and discord and replacing it with the culture of peace and harmony would constitute an important step towards the achievement of those noble objectives.

The 2005 Summit Outcome recognized that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind. That document also stressed the need to encourage tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and people.

Participants at the summit also committed themselves to creating a world fit for future generations while taking into account the best interests of children. That can only be realized if children can be saved from forceful abduction by terrorists to become child soldiers. Their tender hands should have pens and pencils in them, and should never be forced to use grenades and bombs. Educational institutions should be declared zones of peace, to help nurture young children in a peaceful atmosphere. Gun culture should have no place in a child's mind. Children must always be brought up a climate of peace and harmony.

UNESCO has made a valuable contribution to instilling a culture of peace and non-violence in children by carrying out various activities aimed at children's' welfare. We commend the leading role of UNESCO in the implementation of programmes to observe the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. We strongly call for more targeted and focused activities for children, especially in countries seriously affected by conflict.

Translating those commitments into reality will make a real difference in promoting peace and harmony and greater understanding and cooperation in the world. The continued interfaith dialogue and interaction among civilizations are important to appreciating the core human values they espouse. Tripartite interaction among intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations system and civil society is critical for cross-cultural exchanges and dialogue, which will contribute to peace and harmony among different cultures.

Nepal is the birthplace of Lord Buddha — apostle of peace and harmony, whose teachings of peace, compassion, non-violence and tolerance remain as relevant as ever and have become much more pertinent in our turbulent times. His message of peace and harmony has resonance in every civilization, culture and faith, and provides the guiding principles for the United Nations. Nepal is committed to develop Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, as the fountain of world peace and a world peace city, where people can go to meditate on world peace, hold discourses on the Buddha's teachings and carry out research on his teachings to promote peace and harmony.

We are encouraged by the renewed commitment shown by the International Committee for the Development of Lumbini at a meeting held at United Nations Headquarters on 16 September 2005. The outcome document of that meeting, which is contained

in document A/60/407, testifies to the desire of the international community to extend support and cooperation for the early completion of the projects of the Lumbini development master plan. We are happy to inform the Assembly that significant progress has been made in the implementation of the master plan, although several projects remain to be completed. The invaluable support and cooperation of the United Nations and the international community will go a long way towards the realization of our cherished dream to develop Lumbini as a fountain of world peace and a world peace city. It is our fervent belief that the realization of this cherished dream will significantly contribute to the agenda of the United Nations for the advancement of the culture of peace in the world.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): By proclaiming the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, the General Assembly set the course for the United Nations towards a just and peaceful world. We hope that joint efforts by the international community in eight concrete areas — from education to global peace and security — and the consistent implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace will facilitate the successful transition to a culture of peace and non-violence. In that context, UNESCO, the lead United Nations agency for the Decade, must continue to play an important role.

We are now at the midpoint of the Decade, and there is a need for more advanced and coordinated action. In our judgement, priority should be given to education, including the teaching of the practice of peace and non-violence to children. In the broadest sense of that term, the family, the media and other social and educational institutions should be more actively engaged in activities in this area.

We appreciate the efforts of the delegation of Bangladesh, which have contributed in a significant way to the preparation of the new draft resolution on the culture of peace, which has been co-sponsored by a large number of countries, including Kazakhstan. The draft resolution emphasizes respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and understanding as a means of establishing peace and stability.

It is in this spirit that the delegation of Kazakhstan, among others, is a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" (A/60/L.6), which underlines that tolerance is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. As stressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind and it is very important to respect and understand religions and cultural diversity throughout the world.

An interfaith dialogue is an integral part of the efforts to promote the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. Dialogue among religions is aimed at advocating the culture of peace and at promoting the common values of the Millennium Declaration. Such a dialogue helps to develop understanding and tolerance, while strengthening friendship among peoples amidst the multiplicity of their religions, faiths, cultures and languages.

One of the basic principles of the United Nations consists in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. We welcome the closer attention being paid by the United Nations to the development of interreligious dialogue for peace. In recent years, the General Assembly has adopted a number of important resolutions on the promotion of interreligious dialogue, the development of mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation between religions and cultures, and the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. Kazakhstan supported and was a sponsor of those resolutions.

In Kazakhstan, we are convinced that efforts to strengthen peace and security and ensure prosperity in the twenty-first century increasingly depend on the pursuit of dialogue and interaction among peoples of different faiths, cultures and traditions. We believe that Governments, civil society, the media, the private sector and international organizations must be closely engaged in strengthening interreligious ties.

It is very important to take practical steps to strengthen cooperation among different religions, particularly in the areas of education and the mass media, and to reinforce mutual understanding in order to overcome intolerance and to counter stereotypes. We consider it important to study, disseminate and put into practice lessons learned by different countries in developing interreligious dialogue. That is why Kazakhstan has come up with the initiative of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional

Religions, which was held in Astana in September 2003 with representatives of nearly all world and traditional religions participating. The Congress succeeded in institutionalizing the interreligious dialogue process by establishing a permanent secretariat. The Second Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is to be held next year in Astana to discuss the issues of religion, society and international security.

It is also important to ensure that regional organizations actively participate in the dialogue. In this regard Kazakhstan has offered to host a conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on interfaith accord next spring. It is with that understanding that we became active supporters and a sponsor of an informal meeting of leaders on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace held in New York on 13 September 2005. The Declaration on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace adopted at that meeting invites, inter alia, the international community to intensify cooperation at the international, regional and national levels in the implementation of existing United Nations programmes for the promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

Kazakhstan appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and United Nations Member States to make positive contributions to a culture of peace and stands ready to collaborate with the international community in implementing the programme of action on a culture of peace. Let me voice our confidence that dialogue and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations will result in joint practical measures promoting just and durable peace.

Mr. Yanez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am particularly gratified to be speaking under Mr. Jan Eliasson's presidency, and I would like to start by fully associating myself with what was said this morning by the United Kingdom in its capacity in the presidency of the European Union.

The Spanish delegation welcomes the opportunity to speak during this joint debate on matters of such great importance to the development of peaceful relations among peoples and nations. We would like to do this particularly under one item in the Assembly's programme of work, and that is the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

In keeping with the mandate in General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001, on the Global Agenda, the Secretary-General's report demonstrates how much progress has been achieved by States and civil society organizations, as well as by some United Nations organizations, in developing activities within the context of the Programme of Action. The compilation of the information received on activities undertaken highlights the seminal character of the initiative taken in 1998 by the then President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Khatami. His proposal was followed by suggestions from various Member States of the Organization, and they have given rise to particular interest from many others who have lent their support, as well as from international institutions of all types.

UNESCO has played an important part as a catalyst for proposals, initiatives and thinking. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, among others, has also mobilized efforts and concrete actions to attain the objectives of the Programme of Action. This has all served to promote proposals for the development of a culture of peace, which was welcomed in Assembly resolution 59/142 of 15 December 2004.

Spain supports these initiatives and activities and fully shares the common goals of generating greater understanding and overcoming prejudice and misperceptions of others and any polarization in relations that might imperil stability or world peace. That is why the Spanish delegation worked with many others to ensure that our common goals would be appropriately reflected in the outcome document of the summit (*resolution 60/1*), adopted this past 16 September. In paragraph 144 of that document is a specific reference to the initiative for an Alliance of Civilizations, which the President of the Spanish Government, jointly with the Prime Minister of Turkey, presented to the Secretary-General, who endorsed it on 14 July. As is well known, the Secretary-General has decided to establish a High-level Group to consider and propose concrete measures to activate the Alliance of Civilizations.

The Alliance of Civilizations initiative is not meant to replace or marginalize other efforts by the international community to promote greater understanding among peoples and nations belonging to different cultures. The concept document presented by the Secretary-General with the support of Spain and Turkey is based on the desire to use other, earlier orientations and initiatives. The aim of the Alliance is to direct the international community's actions at a

distinct new level, with a particular focus on relations between the West and the Islamic world, dealing, in general, with common problems that arise in all cultures and societies. The Alliance seeks to give a central role back to people of goodwill, rather than to fanatics and extremists who foment division and hate.

To that end, the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations should propose to the Secretary-General and, through him, to the international community strategies and practical actions to be implemented by Governments, international organizations and civil society actors. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (*A/60/259*), the most urgent task is to devise a strategy through which to create a coalition of all those peoples who do not believe in inciting violence or support extremism – and who surely make up the great majority of humankind. In the opinion of the Secretary-General, the Alliance of Civilizations would be the appropriate forum within which to devise such a strategy.

Spain is firmly convinced of that and joins the Secretary-General's call for an Alliance of Civilizations, which continues to receive significant support from States, international organizations and social actors. Now is the moment for States and organizations to contribute ideas and proposals for the preparation of the strategies needed by the Alliance. It is important to pursue implementation of the various initiatives, as the 1998 call for a Dialogue among Civilizations (*resolution 53/22*) continues to bear fruit and contribute to collective actions and reflection.

In that context, Spain believes it is important, among other things, to pursue the considerations reflected in the draft resolution presented by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations (*A/60/L.6*). For that reason, Spain has joined the list of sponsors of that draft resolution. Likewise, the draft resolution presented by the delegation of Bangladesh on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children (*A/60/L.5*) and the draft resolution presented by the delegation of the Philippines on the promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace (*A/60/L.4*) are highly valuable and demonstrate the crucial importance of the issue under our consideration and the need to defend those values, which Spain shares and actively promotes.

Spain will host the first meeting of the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations, to be held in Palma de Mallorca in November. We hope that, during that meeting, the first effective steps will be taken to overcome what some have called the ideology of fear. It is the ideology of fear that incites fear and conflictive perceptions of other peoples, with the very harmful effects with which we are familiar, in relations among political, cultural and religious communities and which takes advantage of that fear and erroneous perceptions to achieve its ends. Overcoming the ideology of fear will require practical actions in the political, cultural, religious and educational spheres as well as in the media, among other areas, with particular emphasis on youth and with an eye to the future.

The Alliance of Civilizations must be a sustained, long-term action if it is to be a catalyst for a genuinely universal awareness of the importance of the task we face. In order to succeed, the virtue of modesty needs the support of hard work. That can be achieved through tireless efforts in day-to-day activities and by taking timely, concrete actions at the local, national, regional and international levels. In short, it is a question of moving beyond the indispensable dialogue and taking common action — doing things together in unity — at times overcoming our differences and at other times taking strength from the diversity that enriches our relations.

That is the path for the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, and that is the understanding of the Secretary-General. We want to reaffirm our support for the decisions that the Secretary-General took so that the Alliance of Civilizations can take shape in accordance with the work plan set out. We are convinced that it is an objective deserving of the wholehearted support of all Member States. We hope that will be the case.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Wahab (Organization of the Islamic Conference): We would like to express our profound appreciation for the initiative of Bangladesh on a culture of peace (*A/60/L.5*), and that of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the dialogue among civilizations (*A/60/L.6*). We would also like to thank those Member States that are taking the initiative of promoting

interreligious dialogue and cooperation by creating institutions addressing the causes of peace, pluralism, dialogue and understanding among nations and civilizations.

We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's efforts to respond to the need to bridge divides and overcome prejudice, misconceptions, misperceptions and polarization. The excellent work being done on those issues by some of the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular UNESCO, deserves our special thanks.

All civilizations, religions and cultures welcome unity and diversity of the human race. History shows us that all civilizations have been enriched and developed through dialogue and interaction with other civilizations. History also shows us that the lack of shared knowledge and understanding and the lack of respect for various cultures and civilizations can impact negatively on regional and international security, stability and prosperity.

Today, globalization has brought about greater interaction among various nations and civilizations. The process of globalization has the potential to facilitate the promotion of understanding, peaceful coexistence and cooperation among various nations and civilizations. But it also has the potential to provoke cross-civilizational misunderstanding. Today, we find many barriers of accumulated misunderstanding and the vestiges of ideas that often have faulty foundations.

We believe that the dissemination of erroneous concepts through the media and education systems gives rise to ideological deviation, which can harm the interests of all humankind. We believe, furthermore, that the frequent placing of the term "Islamic" before the word "terrorism" is a sacrilege. It is highly dangerous. We believe that utmost care should be exercised not to create a perception that might lead to enmity based on religious grounds among hundreds of millions of people.

Media and education complement one another and there is a dire need to deploy media and educational strategies around the world, in each country, to address deviant thoughts. Media institutions should be encouraged to play a role in spreading the culture of dialogue and tolerance, based on the recognition of cultural pluralism. The culture of dialogue and mutual understanding should be adopted in school curricula and textbooks. Curricula and textbooks must be cleansed of non-objective statements about the cultures of others and of all that can trigger feelings of hatred towards others. It is important to encourage the exchange of media materials that can familiarize their users with the cultures of peoples and promote the learning of languages and translation activities, so as to break down cultural barriers.

Islam advocates compassion, tolerance and coexistence among all peoples of the world. Since its inception, the OIC has been making serious efforts to strengthen ties among Muslim peoples and the peoples of the world in general. The OIC has been organizing symposia and seminars in coordination with other concerned institutions for the promotion of cultural and civilizational dialogue. We believe that dialogue among various cultures and civilizations should be based on mutual respect. We believe that sincere and sustained dialogue will foster mutual understanding, appreciation and respect among nations and civilizations.

In his visit to the Council of Europe a fortnight ago, the Secretary General of the OIC, Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, had highly useful discussions on ways and means of promoting dialogue and cooperation. We hope that the OIC and the Council of Europe will work jointly to address the challenges of international terrorism and Islamophobia. The OIC and its Secretary General stand ready to work together with all national, regional and international institutions to promote harmony, cooperation and mutual understanding.

Before concluding, we would like to express our earnest hope that the draft resolutions of Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran before the Assembly and a draft resolution to be presented by Pakistan will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

Before we proceed further, I should like to inform Assembly members that, at the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/60/L.4 will be taken at a later date.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/60/L.5 and A/60/L.6, as orally revised.

We will start with draft resolution A/60/L.5, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace

and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010". Let me add that the following countries have joined as sponsors: Brunei Darussalam, Guinea-Bissau, Marshall Islands and Myanmar.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.5?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/3).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We now turn to draft resolution A/60/L.6, entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", as orally revised.

I would like to read the list of the following new sponsors: Austria, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Jamaica, Liberia, Monaco, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Sweden and Ukraine.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.6, as orally revised?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/4).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the speaker or speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes, and they should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Garcia-Matos (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fully supports the contents and significance of the culture of peace and the dialogue among civilizations. They form a substantive part of the revolutionary project of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

My Government's position is that knowledge of, and constructive acceptance of, different cultures is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of the dialogue of peace, which will enable us to build and strengthen our societies, in particular as regards teaching children about non-violence. This is why we support the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

However, despite the great importance our State attaches to this topic, we will not be co-sponsoring the current draft resolutions, because we have reservations on the thirteenth preambular paragraph of A/60/L.5 and the fourth preambular paragraph of A/60/L.6. The reason for this is that there are references to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela sees that document as a simple working draft that does not give rise to any mandate or obligation for the Republic, because of its flawed character.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 42 and 43.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.